

NEWSLETTER

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TIME PARENTS SPEND WITH THEIR KIDS

Everybody knows that many mothers today work outside the home. Everybody knows that there are many single parents nearly all of whom have to work.

Many assume that this means mothers today spend less time with their children. These assumptions as well as the predictions that children cannot thrive when Mommy works have to be looked at carefully.

According to a book published by the Russell Sage Foundation in 2006 (Changing Rhythms of American Family Life) mothers spend MORE time with their children than they did formerly. Mothers spent 12.9 hours per week playing with, caring for, and teaching their children in the year 2000 compared to 10.6 hours in 1965. And married fathers, bless them, more than doubled their hours of child care from 2.6 hours to 6.5 hours per week.

School-age children were asked what they most wanted most from their parents. Many answered they wanted more time with their parents. In a recent study, about a third of children wish their parents were less stressed and tired. Each of my twin grandchildren have told me, "I wish my parents would spend more time with me." But they have also said, "I wish my Mom weren't so tired!"

The way parents today manage to spend more time with their children than 35 years ago is by including them in their activities. Their multitasking includes the kids in a lot of activities like shopping and leisure. Taking a family walk is a great idea; both parents and children get to do two desirable things: spend time with each other and get some healthy exercise.

Parents today are very busy. But no matter how busy they are they cannot ignore their children's needs or be disinterested in the children. Everybody knows (and Dr. Heins keeps saying) that children need some individual, focused parental attention from each parent every day. (See my ParentTip titled Attention!).

Focusing on each child for a few minutes, while doing nothing else, does more than meet the child's needs. It also gives the busy, stressed-out parent some respite from multitasking. Enjoy!

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For parenting information, a free monthly newsletter, a personal answer to your parenting questions, or to order my parenting book, "ParentTips" visit my website, <http://www.ParentKidsRight.com>.

You can find Dr. Heins on Twitter where she will post website updates: <http://twitter.com/drheins> and on her parenting blog at Dr Heins' Post: <http://www.drheins.blogspot.com/>